Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

ABYEI

Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2018)

Conflict displacement
Figures analysis
ABYEI - Contextual update

The conflict dynamics in Abyei are marked by inter-communal violence between Ngok Dinka and Misseriya migrant communities, often over access to grazing land and water. Criminal activities have intra-ethnic dimensions and are negatively affecting the security situation, as is the presence of armed groups. Perceptions of insecurity and lack of access to services are the main drivers of continued displacement. The security situation in 2017 was relatively calm. The number of violent incidents reportedly decreased between April and October 2017.

The United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) mandate was renewed on 15 November 2017. There has, however, been no progress in the implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 between Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), which established provisions for the co-administration of the area pending a final conflict resolution. Sudan continues to insist that the 2011 agreement represents the way forward, but South Sudan argues that the timeline for implementing the agreement has passed. Ngok Dinka community leaders and the South Sudanese Government also disagrees with the prospect of equal representation in the administration of the area, referring to Abyei’s historical status as an Ngok Dinka chiefdom.
ABYEI - Map of the displacement situation as of 2017

Sources: Displacement data (IDMC); map (OCHA, Reliefweb) created in Jan 2012. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations and IDMC. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.
ABYEI - Stock: 31,000 IDPs
This corresponds to the total number of individuals in a situation of internal displacement at the end of 2017

Sources + source methodology(ies)
The 2017 stock figure for Abyei is based on IOM DTM data collected in Abathok and Agok in April and November 2017, respectively. In both locations, IOM DTM combined quantitative data collection methodologies (household questionnaires) with qualitative data collection (focus groups, key informant interviews). In Agok, IOM also conducted a population estimation exercise, which provided an updated estimate of the total number of displaced households in the area. For Agok, the corresponding population baseline estimate was based on information provided by key informants.

Caveats, limitations, specific monitoring challenges
We have low confidence in the household estimate for Abathok, since no population estimation exercise verifying the total number of displaced households in the area was conducted in 2017. The key informant estimates of the population baseline, on which the calculation is based, is considered to have low reliability. Also, an alternative estimate for Abyei, of 15,000 IDPs, was published by OCHA in the Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2018; the evidence-base for this figure remains unclear, however, and IDMC therefore considers it to have lower reliability than the IOM figures.

IDMC figure, methodology and rationale
First, our figure subtracts about 1,900 IDPs estimated to be in the process of locally integrating (see below the section on provisional solutions). Second, for Abathok, IOM DTM stated that the estimated displaced population baseline ranged between 2,000 and 3,000 households. To ensure a conservative estimate, we used the lower figure for the calculation of the Abathok estimate.

Significant changes from last year: methodological and contextual changes
The increase compared to the 2016 figure (20,000 IDPs) is due to a change in methodology, as the 2016 figure was based on a decaying figure reported by partners since 2011. The IOM DTM intention surveys in 2017 enabled use to update the estimate for Abyei.
ABYEI - New displacements: N/A

This corresponds to the estimated number of internal displacement movements to have taken place during the year.

We did not identify or obtain any data for this category. No new displacement took place in Abyei, according to contextual information communicated to use by partners working on the ground in Abyei.
We did not identify or obtain any data for this category, as none of the data-collecting agencies in Abyei track returns systematically. As in neighbouring South Sudan, ongoing return movements are reportedly pendular. While partners state that returns are ongoing, there are thus no estimates available for 2017.
Challenges in accounting for returns

With no data-collecting agencies tracking returns in Abyei, the provisional solutions figure is partial and only includes an estimated number of IDPs that are in the process of integrating locally.

Local integration in process: About 1,900 IDPs are estimated to have been locally integrated based on IOM DTM’s intention surveys in Agok and Abathok, which indicate that some IDPs intend to stay in their areas of displacement or are hesitant about returning to their pre-displacement locations due to having integrated in their areas of displacement. This estimate is based on survey data targeting a sample of the displaced population in each location. However, no objective assessment of IDP integration in host communities has been made. There is in other words insufficient evidence that durable solutions have been achieved.